



Children's Ministry Policy

To Reduce Risk of Child Abuse

Updated: August 28th, 2026

Purpose of Policy

Jesus loves children. Clackamas Bible Church ("CBC") is committed to creating a safe place for children and youth to delight in God, to grow in Jesus Christ, and to understand His love and acceptance. We nurture our children by training and equipping compassionate, responsible ministry leaders to serve children. Every ministry that serves children under the age of eighteen is accountable to God for the stewardship of young lives. This policy articulates our best attempt to follow through on our commitment to keep children safe.

Scope of Policy

To ensure the safety of our children, protect our volunteers and paid staff from false accusation, and to safeguard the reputation of our church and the Christian community, every worker, whether paid or volunteer, is required to adhere to this policy in order to be eligible to work with children.

- I. This policy extends to all events as defined in this policy that are:
 1. Held on CBC property
 2. Held off CBC property and hosted by CBC, or
 3. Held off CBC property and not hosted by CBC but involve the supervision of CBC children by CBC staff or workers.
- II. This policy further extends to non-CBC affiliated groups that use the CBC facility for other ministry purposes that include the supervised care of children apart from their parents.
- III. In addition to training in and complying with this policy, any non-CBC affiliated group using the CBC property for other ministry purposes may adopt and implement their own child safety policy as long as such policy meets at least the minimum standards of the CBC Child Safety Policy.
- IV. This policy encompasses the following major topics
 1. Worker Selection
 2. Worker Annual Renewal
 3. Worker Supervision
 4. Defining Child Abuse
 5. Child Abuse Reporting and Responding Obligations
- V. Any issues not outlined in this policy, but dealing with child safety, will be referred to the Elder Board for review and necessary action.

//
//

Definitions

- **Adult Worker**: Any person, whether volunteer, intern, or paid staff, 18 years-of-age or older who is working with children.
- **Youth Worker**: Any person 11 to 17 years-of-age who is working with children.
- **Church Member**: any person who regularly attends Clackamas Bible Church.
- **Ministry Leader**: A person in charge of a specific ministry, e.g. Middle School Youth Group.
- **Staff**: Any paid employee of CBC.
- **Staff Supervisor**: A paid CBC staff employee in charge of an event or the staff person who oversees the ministry involved in the event.
- **Children**: Minors who are under the age of 18.
- **Nursery**: childcare for children under age 4.
- **Elementary**: childcare for children between age 4 and the completion of 5th grade.
- **Event**: An activity about which the church explicitly states that children will be supervised apart from their parents.

Policy

1) Worker Selection

a) Everyone who works with children, both church members and non-members, including elders, is required to submit an *Application for Screening and Reference Check*. Clackamas Bible Church reserves the right to refuse any volunteer. Application forms are available online or through the church office. Any worker who has submitted to a background check and screening process prior to the implementation date of this policy is not required to submit a new *Application for Screening and Reference Check* but is subject to the annual renewal policy as described in Section 2.

b) Parents are welcome to observe their child in any class or club. However, if a parent desires to observe for more than two weeks, they must complete an *Application for Screening and Reference Check*.

c) The Application Process

All prospective workers must submit a written *Application for Screening and Reference Check*.

- i. All applicants will have a personal informal interview with the ministry leader of the area where they wish to work to determine strengths and compatibility. In cases of multiple areas of interest, the ministry leader of the primary area of service will conduct the interview. The ministry leader will provide notes from the interview to the CBC Staff member responsible for supervision of that ministry.
- ii. All applicants are required to provide at least two references able to speak to the applicant's fitness and ability to work with children. The CBC Staff member responsible for the ministry in which the applicant desires to serve will make contact by phone or written message to all references provided.
- iii. All applicants must have attended Clackamas Bible Church regularly for at least six months before applying to work with children.

//

- iv. All applications and reference information are maintained in duplicate and secure digital files. Any original paper copies of the application or any related documents shall be securely kept in the office of business administrator and marked confidential. The applicant, selected ministry leaders, Elder Board, and church staff responsible for processing the applications may review the application.
- v. Criminal background investigations are conducted on all applicants 18 years-of-age and older. Background investigations are conducted at a minimum of every three years. Applicants under the age of 18 are subject to a background investigation following their 18th birthday.
- vi. Any applicant with a conviction for physical or sexual abuse will be disqualified from the application process. All other applicants with a criminal history will be considered by the elders on a case-by-case basis.
- vii. In lieu of a background check, applicants between the ages of 11-17, must submit a written *Youth Volunteer Permission Form* to their ministry leader.
- viii. No applicant will be allowed to serve until their application has been processed, a criminal background investigation conducted when applicable, and they have completed child safety training. CBC office staff will notify the appropriate ministry leader when the applicant has been approved to work.
- ix. All applicants will complete a training on this policy and pass the child safety exam.
- x. All applicants will acknowledge that they have read and will abide by this policy before they are approved workers.
- xi. All applicants will acknowledge that they have read and agree to adhere to the *CBC Statement of Faith*.

2) Worker Annual Renewal

a) Child safety policy and procedures will be reviewed annually with all workers, ministry leaders, staff, and elders.

b) All workers are required to renew their eligibility annually. This renewal includes filling out an *Annual Renewal Application*, attending an annual training either in person or online, and passing an online exam.

c) Any worker who has submitted to a background check and screening process prior to the implementation date of this policy shall complete training on the policy within not more than 30 days of implementation. Such worker shall subsequently complete all renewal requirements annually.

d) In the event that the elders become aware of any accusation or behavior that could render an applicant or worker unfit to work with children, the elders will place such worker on a leave of absence until such time as the elders have completed a review of the accusation. In the case of an applicant, the elders may delay or deny any applicant's involvement in children's or youth ministry until such time as the elders have completed a review of the accusation. Upon completion of the elders' review, the elders will either allow the applicant or worker to be approved or reinstated, or will communicate in writing to the applicant or worker that they are no longer permitted to serve in the children's ministries of CBC.

3) Worker Supervision

For the safety of children and workers the following guidelines must be observed.

a) Two-Worker Rule/Three-Person Rule

- i. **No worker shall ever be alone with a child.**
- ii. **Two-Worker Rule for Ages 3 and Below:** Two workers shall always be present in any event or situation that includes children ages three (3) or younger. One of these workers must be an Adult Worker, and the other may be a Youth Worker. Youth Workers (ages 11 to 17) may assist Adult Workers, but cannot replace them.
- iii. **Three-Person Rule for Ages 4 and above:** Every effort should be made to ensure two workers are present during any event. If a situation arises in which two workers are not present, under no circumstances shall one worker ever be alone with a child. However, in the event that all children present are at least four (4) years old and above, a worker may be alone with **more than one** child as long as the group is in a public space with the doors open and a clear public view of any activities. It is the worker's duty to ensure clear public visibility at all times. **Steps should be taken to return to a two-worker rule situation as soon as possible.**
- iv. Two workers living in the same household do not fulfill the intent of the "two-worker rule." If a ministry involves two or more workers from the same household, then one or more unrelated worker or youth worker must also be present.
- v. The two-worker rule extends to transporting children during events, with the exception of multiple vehicle caravans. In any event, in line with section 3.a.i, no worker shall ever transport only one child.
- vi. Clackamas Bible Church is released from responsibility for any allegations or claims resulting from transportation of children not taking place during an event.
- vii. Should a situation arise in which the two-worker rule cannot be met, the Staff Supervisor will use their best judgment in line with this policy and the following guidelines. The Staff Supervisor may, in collaboration with the worker:
 - a. Cancel the class or event
 - b. Combine classes or groups so that the two-worker rule is met
 - c. Move to another location where at minimum the three-person rule can be met, preferably with another person in close proximity. In this situation, the worker must communicate with the other person that there is only one worker in the group and take ongoing steps to comply with the visibility requirements of the three-person rule.
- viii. In an unplanned situation that violates the two-worker rule, the worker must report this to the ministry leader or Staff Supervisor using the *Incident Report Form*. The ministry leader must report this to the Staff Supervisor.

b) General Guidelines

- i. Workers must never leave a child unattended at any time.
- ii. Events that involve children should include an adequate ratio of supervisory personnel to the number of children as specified below:
 - a. Six weeks of age up to 30 Months - 1:1.5
 - b. 30 months of age up to age 4 - 1:3
 - c. Age 4 and older - 1:15

- iii. All nursery and elementary aged children left in the care of workers at an event must be signed in using the check-in system provided and may only be picked up by the parent or guardian specified upon drop-off. If another adult or sibling is authorized to pick up the child, they must present to the worker a claim ticket showing they have been authorized to pick up the child.
- iv. Supervision will be provided before and after an event until all children are in the care of an authorized person. Workers may escort children to their parents in the event a parent has given express written permission for the worker to do so.
- v. Once a child has been released to a parent or authorized person, the child may not remain in the childcare area and may not return without a parent.
- vi. For the safety of both the children and the other members of the congregation, all workers should instruct children to maintain a walking pace at all times in the church building.
- vii. All rooms or locations where children meet are to have viewing windows. In the absence of viewing windows, the doors are to be left open to ensure visual accountability.
- viii. When a classroom is in use, the main door must always remain unlocked and the blinds must remain open at all times. During the evening hours, a light must remain on.
- ix. Written permission from a parent or guardian is required for any event held off of CBC property which involves the supervision of CBC children by CBC staff or workers away from their parents.
- x. Overnight events require adult chaperones. If an overnight event is co-ed, then the chaperones must be of mixed gender. A single chaperone must not sleep in the same room as children. All chaperones must have completed the application process listed in Section 1 of this policy.
- xi. One worker should not counsel an individual child in a secluded area. Workers may move out of "earshot" for a private discussion but should never be out of the line of sight of another adult or youth worker.
- xii. All workers who have completed an initial application or renewal form for the current year are expected to follow this policy at all times when in a situation covered by this policy irrespective of whether they are an official worker at the event.
- xiii. Any contact with children apart from events will be considered personal. Clackamas Bible Church is released from responsibility for any allegations or claims resulting from any worker's personal contact with children.
- xiv. Original copies of all forms, permission slips, injury reports, or any other form or paper required by this policy shall be securely kept in the office of business administrator and marked confidential. Copies of these forms may be kept in classrooms or ministry areas as needed or required by this policy.

c) Appropriate Touching

- i. Care must be taken to ensure that any physical contact with children is age appropriate. What is appropriate for one age group is not always appropriate with another.
- ii. Infants may need to be held, patted, hugged or rocked. Such conduct is appropriate and expected with this age group.
- iii. Toddlers and preschoolers may also need to be hugged and comforted.

//

- iv. School age children of any age haven't grown too old for a caring and affirming touch by an adult. Caution should be taken, however, to avoid any contact that could be interpreted as too intimate. Workers should be responsive to the affection of children but should never demand or request affection or touch from children.

d) Restroom Guidelines

- i. Workers will not change diapers or assist children in the restroom without explicit written permission from parents or guardians upon check-in.
- ii. When working with infants, workers will change diapers only after verifying written permission and in the presence of another worker. Such written permission will be noted on the child's nametag or kept accessible in the area where the relevant child is being watched.
- iii. Nursery workers will assist children in the restroom as needed if the parent or guardian has given written permission upon check-in. The door to the restroom should never be closed on the child and worker.
- iv. Outside of the nursery context, workers will not assist children in the restrooms. Instead, they will contact a parent if assistance is needed.
- v. A bathroom door should never be closed on the child and worker. A worker may escort a child to the bathroom and stand in the doorway with the door open but may not enter the restroom unless another worker is standing in the doorway holding the door open. If a child needs assistance with staying on task, handwashing, or fasteners, a worker may assist the child while another worker stands in the doorway with the door open.

e) Appropriate Conduct

- i. Workers must not intentionally do or say anything that causes physical or mental injury to a child (See section 4(a) – Examples of Abuse).
- ii. Workers are never to spank, hit, grab, shake, or otherwise physically discipline children (See section 4(a) – Examples of Abuse).
- iii. Workers should refrain from communicating frustration with or at a child. In a situation where a worker is overwhelmed or frustrated, he or she should communicate with the ministry leader or staff supervisor and ask for any needed help.
- iv. Disciplinary issues should be immediately reported to the ministry leader and the child's parent or guardian. Workers should refrain from speaking negatively about a child's behavior unless in the context of reporting it to either the parent or the ministry leader.
- v. Workers must not make any comments that are sexual in nature, even as a "joke." Nor shall they inappropriately touch a child or make any other comments or take any actions that could be interpreted as sexually arousing or satisfying to the worker, the child, or any third party (See section 4(a) – Examples of Abuse).
- vi. Workers must never ask a child to keep a secret from their parents or guardian. Neither should they promise ahead of time to keep a secret they hear from a child.
- vii. **Workers must not engage in sexual relationships with children. Such behavior will lead to immediate referral to law enforcement and may lead to a criminal conviction and imprisonment. Clackamas Bible Church will not provide for the worker's legal defense in such cases.**

//
//

f) Children with Special Needs

- i. Sometimes special needs are not always visible. It is the responsibility of the workers to read the child registration forms and ask any questions that arise.
- ii. Adjustments to standard protocol may be necessary. Discuss any accommodation needs with the parent at the time the child is dropped off.
- iii. Workers should be patient and compassionate. Any worker that feels overwhelmed should ask for help.

g) Electronic Communication and Social Media

- i. Ministry leaders utilizing any form of electronic communication will discuss appropriate use with workers, children, and parents.
- ii. Workers must not transmit any content that is illicit, unsavory, abusive, pornographic, discriminatory, harassing, or disrespectful when communicating with each other or with children.
- iii. Workers must not text or upload any photographs of children to any AI platform or any forum such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, or any other online media platform without written parental consent.
- iv. Unless specifically requested or approved by a staff supervisor, workers should not use their phones to take photographs of children.
- v. Workers should never text or otherwise communicate electronically with a child of any age without the parent's knowledge and permission. When communicating electronically with any child, workers should take care to include a parent or other child in the electronic conversation and should avoid one-on-one messaging with children. Workers should never send electronic communication to a child in 8th grade or below without that child's parent or guardian or another worker being included in the communication as a group text or email.
- vi. Before sending, workers should re-read all electronic or handwritten communication to anticipate potential misunderstandings and reflect sound judgment. The context in which a communication is sent may not be the context in which it is read.
- vii. Should ministry leaders, workers, or any other person subject to this policy become aware of any violations of the established protocols for electronic communication by anyone, including children, they should report those violations to the ministry leader, Staff Supervisor, or a member of the Elder Board. If a ministry leader is involved in the suspected violation, the workers should report to the Staff Supervisor or a member of the Elder Board.
- viii. When communicating electronically with any child, all workers are considered on duty.
- ix. All electronic or handwritten communication between workers and children should never be considered private communication.
- x. All electronic or handwritten communication between workers and children are subject to review upon request by CBC pastors, the Elder Board, parents or guardians, and the church's legal representatives.

h) Illness

- i. For the safety of all, workers who are ill with a fever or a communicable illness that can be transmitted by cough or touch, should find an eligible substitute or notify their ministry leader of their illness.

//

- ii. Should a child arrive ill, or become ill, at an event, he/she should be returned to a parent or guardian as soon as the illness is discovered. If this is not possible, the child should be isolated in a manner that will allow supervision to continue until he/she can be returned to the parent or guardian.
- iii. Precautions should be taken to limit contact with bodily fluids of any kind – for example, runny noses, teary eyes and dirty diapers. When changing diapers, workers should always use surgical gloves and wash with soap and hot water afterwards. In the event that soap and hot water are not readily available, the use of an antibacterial hand sanitizer is recommended

i) Injury

- i. When a worker becomes aware of any minor injury to a child or worker, he/she will take steps to ensure that proper medical attention is given to the injured person immediately. For children, the parents or guardians will be notified of any minor injury when they pick up their child.
- ii. Workers should give immediate attention to any injury requiring medical treatment beyond simple first aid. Workers should also immediately notify the parent or guardian of the injured person, as well as the ministry leader or Staff Supervisor.
- iii. Workers should prepare a written *Notice of Injury Report Form* whenever a moderate to severe injury occurs during an event.
- iv. Workers should submit a completed *Notice of Injury Report Form* to the ministry leader or Staff Supervisor.
- v. All workers must familiarize themselves with and comply with emergency preparedness directions as specified in the First Responder Team Protocols.

4) Defining Child Abuse

Child abuse refers to non-accidental physical or mental injury, negligent treatment or maltreatment, sexual abuse or exploitation, or threat of harm to an unmarried person under the age of eighteen.

a) Examples of Abuse

Physical Abuse	Any physical injury to a child that has been caused by other than accidental means. It may appear as bruises, burns, fractures, bites, cuts, sprains, or internal injuries; or auditory, dental, ocular, or brain damage. Warning Signs of Physical Abuse in Children • Frequent injuries or unexplained bruises, welts, or cuts. • Child is always watchful and “on alert,” as if waiting for something bad to happen. • Injuries appear to have a pattern, such as marks from a hand or belt. • Shies away from touch, flinches at sudden movements, or seems afraid to go home. • Wears inappropriate clothing to cover up injuries, such as long-sleeved shirts on hot days.
----------------	---

Emotional or Mental Abuse	Any actions or statements which form a pattern of destruction so that a child's ability to think, reason, or have feelings are harmed. Warning Signs of Emotional/Mental Abuse in Children • Excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong. • Shows extremes in behavior (extremely compliant or extremely demanding; extremely passive or extremely aggressive). • Doesn't seem to be attached to the parent or caregiver. • Acts either inappropriately adult (taking care of other children) or inappropriately infantile (rocking, thumb-sucking, tantrums).
Neglect	Negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child that causes actual harm or substantial risk of harm to a child's health, welfare, and safety. Warning Signs of Neglect in Children • Clothes are ill fitting, filthy, or inappropriate for the weather. • Hygiene is consistently bad (unbathed, matted and unwashed hair, noticeable body odor). • Untreated illnesses and physical injuries. • Frequently unsupervised, left alone, or allowed to play in unsafe situations and environments. • Frequently late or missing from school.
Threat of Harm	All actions, statements, or written or non-verbal messages conveying threats of physical or mental injury, which are serious enough to unsettle the child's mind. This includes all activities, conditions, and circumstances that place the child at threat of severe harm of physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, mental injury, or other child abuse or neglect. (OAR 413-015-1000) Warning Signs of Threat of Harm in Children • A newborn whose primary caregiver appears to lack the skills necessary to provide adequate care, even though the child has not suffered harm. • A child living with a person who is involved in child pornography. • Caregiver behavior which is out of control and threatening to a child's safety – e.g., driving intoxicated with children in car, not taking prescribed medication, or behavior that is due to drug or alcohol abuse or mental, emotional, or physical problems.

Sexual Abuse	Any incident of sexual contact or exploitation with a minor that is used for the sexual arousal or gratification of the offender, the minor, or a third party. Child sexual abuse can include physical contact and non-contact behaviors. Sexual abuse is criminal behavior (see also Oregon Revised Statutes, ORS Chapter 163). Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse in Children • Trouble walking or sitting. • Displays knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to his or her age, or even seductive behavior. • Makes strong efforts to avoid a specific person, without an obvious reason. • Does not want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities. • An STD or pregnancy, especially under the age of 14. • Runs away from home.
--------------	---

(Portions of the above information is taken from the booklet, Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect, Children's Services Division, Department of Human Resources, Salem, Oregon, and Revised April 1995.)

b) Where Does Sexual Abuse Occur and Who Are the Perpetrators?

- i. Child sexual abuse can occur anywhere and can be perpetrated by anybody. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent or another child.
- ii. In most instances of child sexual abuse, the perpetrator is known by the victim.

5) Child Abuse Reporting and Responding Obligations

Any accusations of physical or sexual abuse of a child will be taken seriously and reported to law enforcement authorities as required. Should a worker be accused of child abuse, they must cooperate with any investigation that ensues. Until the investigation is completed and the matter resolved, the accused individual shall be placed on a leave of absence and shall not be involved in any event that includes contact with children. Section 2(d) is incorporated herein.

a) Who Must Report?

- i. All Mandatory Reporters serving in any ministry at CBC are expected to immediately follow all mandatory child abuse reporting procedures as required by Oregon Law. (See ORS 419B.005(6) for a list of mandatory reporters.) CBC requests that mandatory reporters also notify a pastor of CBC that a report has been made by submitting a *Notice of Report of Child Abuse* form to the Staff Supervisor.
- ii. In addition, Clackamas Bible Church considers all workers, paid or volunteer, to be reporters of child abuse.
- iii. If a non-mandatory reporter worker observes, hears, or receives a report of child abuse or suspected child abuse, he/she must immediately report it to a ministry leader, Staff Supervisor, or member of the Elder Board by completing a *Notice of Report of Child Abuse* form.

- iv. If a ministry leader, Staff Supervisor, or member of the Elder Board is the one being accused, a worker should not involve that person in the reporting.
- v. Once the report is made, the church, as a mandatory reporter, will follow ORS 419B.015 in making an oral report of the incident to the Department of Human Services (DHS), or the appropriate law enforcement agency.
- vi. All reporters of abuse remain anonymous to the accused unless required to testify in court. By Oregon statute, the reporter making a good-faith report is immune from any liability, both civil and criminal, as long as there are reasonable grounds for making the report.
- vii. Failure of a mandatory reporter to report an incident of abuse may be punishable by fine or imprisonment.

b) Full Cooperation Given to Civil Authorities Under the Guidance of Church Legal Counsel

- i. Upon receiving a report of abuse, the ministry leader, Staff Supervisor, or Elder Board member will contact DHS, the appropriate law enforcement agency, the church's legal counsel, and the church's insurance representative.
- ii. If a child discloses abuse, workers should not attempt an in-depth investigation with them. Workers should ask only what happened, taking care to write down everything they say verbatim.
- iii. Workers should gather the following information for the investigation: the alleged victim's full name, date of birth, the names and addresses of his or her parents or guardians, the nature of the abuse, including any evidence and any explanations given for injuries, and the name of the alleged abuser.
- iv. Workers should not press the child for details, ask leading questions, or attempt to put words in his/her mouth. For the integrity of the investigation, workers should leave the in-depth interview to professional investigators.
- v. Workers should fill out the *Notice of Report of Child Abuse* form and give it to the ministry leader, Staff Supervisor, or a member of the Elder Board as soon as they suspect abuse, preferably on the same day. A delay in reporting could jeopardize the investigation.

c) Responding to Allegations

Clackamas Bible Church adheres to the following principles when responding to allegations of child abuse:

- i. All allegations are taken seriously and responded to as if they are true.
- ii. Workers should not display an attitude that may be interpreted as a desire to minimize the allegation, keep it secret, or cover it up.
- iii. Workers should not make any statements, or demonstrate any actions or attitudes that may cause the alleged victim to feel guilt or blame.
- iv. Workers must be supportive and reassuring to the alleged victim.
- v. Workers should never discount an accusation because of who is accusing or being accused.
- vi. If an accusation of child abuse is made against any worker or staff member at CBC, the elders will contact legal counsel and the church's insurance representative and will hire a third-party investigative agency to conduct an impartial investigation.
- vii. **At CBC, transparency and integrity in handling all allegations is non-negotiable.**

//
//

d) Privacy and Confidentiality

- i. It is vitally important that suspected child abuse is reported and equally important that it only be reported to and discussed with appropriate authorities. To do otherwise could compromise the investigation.
- ii. Under no circumstances shall any incident or suspicion of child abuse be discussed with anyone other than your designated ministry leader, member of the Elder Board, a pastor not accused of abuse, Department of Human Services (DHS) personnel, or a law enforcement officer.
- iii. All media requests must be answered by the elders under the guidance of legal counsel and CBC's media policy.

e) Care For Victims and the Accused

- i. Workers should not discuss the allegations or investigation with anyone who is not a party to the investigation.
- ii. Whether founded or unfounded, the investigation is not open to public disclosure or discussion.
- iii. Workers should notify the pastor immediately if a church member is accused or victimized.
- iv. That pastor will stand ready to counsel, comfort, or confront when appropriate.
- v. An allegation that warrants a report is a significant opportunity to love, support, pray for, and counsel the member family and must include follow-up.

f) Victims are never held responsible for incidents of abuse.

It takes courage for a victim of sexual abuse to report the behavior. When victims disclose abuse, it is important to remind them that they have not done anything wrong, and they did the right thing by telling someone. CBC is committed to the protection of children from abuse and will not harbor or protect those accused of harming a child.

END OF DOCUMENT